United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Upper Colorado Region
Provo Area Office
302 East 1860 South
Provo, Utah 84606-7317

IN REPLY REFER TO:
PRO-770
ENV-6.00

MAY 24 2010

To: Interested Persons, Organizations, and Agencies

Subject: Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment for Arthur V. Watkins Dam Enlargement Project – Weber Basin Project – Box Elder County, Utah

The Bureau of Reclamation, Provo Area Office (Reclamation) wishes to inform you that a feasibility study and Environmental Assessment (EA) are being initiated as directed by Congress in Public Law 110-229. This letter provides information on how to participate in the public scoping process as well as details regarding a public meeting to be held on Thursday, June 17, 2010.

The proposed action, to be analyzed in both the feasibility study and the EA, is to increase the storage capacity of Willard Reservoir from 215,000 acre-feet (AF) total capacity to 250,000 acre-feet of active capacity. Based on preliminary analyses conducted to date, the proposed increase in storage capacity would be accomplished by raising the crest of the A.V. Watkins Dam embankment and installing a new low-level outlet. The crest would be raised by 4 feet, allowing the maximum water surface elevation to be raised by an equal amount. A new low-level outlet would be constructed that would lower the minimum pool by 1.5 feet. A new pumping station and pipeline would be constructed to pump water from the new low-level outlet to Willard Canal, the point of discharge of the existing pumping station.

Arthur V Watkins Dam, initially constructed during 1958-1964, is located 12 miles northwest of Ogden on the shore of the Great Salt Lake. It is a zoned earthfill-type of offstream structure, with a structural height of 36 feet. The top width is approximately 25 feet, and the base width is approximately 470 feet (the dimensions vary). The dam is about 14.5 miles long in a rough rectangle, contains about 17 million cubic yards of material, and encloses a reservoir of 215,120 acre-foot capacity (at elevation 4226.0) (227,189 AF according to the 2009 survey). The design active capacity is 198,270 acre-feet (202,160 AF according to the 2009 survey).

Willard Reservoir is a multiple use reservoir providing water for irrigation of project lands, municipal and industrial water for a growing population (over 500,000 people), and for recreation. Willard Reservoir has one of the highest recreation use rates in the State of Utah, and as well as fish and wildlife usage when the Harold S. Crane and Ogden Bay Water Fowl Management Areas are included. A map of the project area is enclosed for your reference.

Currently, Willard Reservoir water rights are authorized or approved at 250,000 acre-feet per year. However, Willard Reservoir was constructed to capture and store only 215,000 AF (a 2009 bathymetry survey calculated the actual capacity of the reservoir to be 227,000 AF). An additional approximate 40,000 AF could be stored and utilized in an enlarged Willard Reservoir. Additional storage capacity is needed to utilize the full Willard Reservoir water rights. Because of the large surface area of the reservoir, the additional storage capacity could be achieved by adding just a few feet to the height of the dam.

Congress has authorized Federal funds to allow the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a feasibility study to enlarge Arthur V. Watkins Dam. The proposed enlargement is one option possible to maximize water storage so the Weber Basin Project can continue to meet increasing water supply needs along the Wasatch Front in Utah.

The feasibility study and EA will be prepared concurrently. The EA will analyze the proposed action in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality and U.S. Department of the Interior regulations implementing NEPA. As required by the NEPA implementing regulations, if potentially significant impacts to the human environment are identified, an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared. If no significant impacts are identified, the Bureau of Reclamation will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact.

This letter begins the process of preparing the aforementioned feasibility study and EA. Reclamation invites interested parties to comment on the scope of analysis, or raise specific issues that they feel should be analyzed. This letter is being sent to approximately 70 municipalities, organizations, and agencies which might have interest in the proposed action.

In order to provide further information about the feasibility study and EA, a public meeting will be held on Thursday, June 17, 2010, at 6 p.m. at the Weber Basin Water Conservancy District Office located at 2837 East Highway 193, Layton Utah. This meeting will begin with a presentation on the proposed action and how it is to be analyzed, and following the presentation, staff from Reclamation and the Weber Basin Water Conservancy District will be available to answer questions.

Written comments may be provided to Reclamation until Friday, June 25, 2010. Written comments should be addressed to the Bureau of Reclamation, Attention: Ben Radcliffe, Attn: PRO-713, 302 East 1860 South, Provo, UT 84606-7317. Comments may also be submitted via e-mail to bradcliffe@usbr.gov.

At the conclusion of the scoping period, a draft feasibility study and EA will be prepared and mailed to the interested public for review and comment. If you need further information, please contact Ben Radcliffe at 801-379-1213. Also, please contact Mr. Radcliffe if you would like to either remain on the mailing list to receive the draft EA for review and comment, or be notified of its availability on the internet. Recipients of this scoping letter who do not indicate an interest in remaining on the mailing list will not receive further information on this project.

Sincerely,

Bruce C. Barrett
Area Manager

Enclosure

cc: PRO-700, PRO-713, PRO-720, PRO-770, PRO-773, PRO-400, UC-140, UC-400, UC-410, UC-700, UC-720, 84-55000
(each w/ encl)

PROJECT AREA FOR A.V. WATKINS FEASIBILITY STUDY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT